

North 1st Street Local Transit Village Plan

First Workshop

Summary

Date: Thursday, June 13, 2019

**Advertised
Time** 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Actual Time: 6:30-9:00pm

Location: Santa Clara County Cafeteria, 70 W. Hedding Street, San Jose, CA 95110

Prepared by: Athina Loumou, SOM

Workshop overview

On June 13th, 2019, around 85 participants (approximately 56 community members, 15 city staff members and 8 consultants) participated in the first North 1st Street Local Transit Village Plan community workshop. The workshop was the first in a series of three community outreach meetings geared towards engaging the community in the North 1st Street Local Transit Village planning process. Participants included neighborhood residents, property owners, and other individuals interested in gaining insight into the planning process.

The workshop began with a welcome and meeting overview from Tracy Tam, planning project manager for the City of San José. The City staff and consultant team then gave a 30/45-minute presentation which focused on the Urban Village planning process, analysis of the existing conditions in the study area and identification of community values for a vision for the future of the study area.

At the end of the presentation, participants broke out into 6 smaller groups (approximately 9 people per group) to engage in small group discussions. Within the groups, participants were asked for their insights on the following three categories to understand attendees' perspectives of the assets within the neighborhood and areas of opportunities:

Identification of Assets:

1. What businesses enhance this neighborhood?
2. Are there are buildings that should be preserved?
3. What services do you like most in your neighborhood?
4. Aside from physical characteristics, are there other assets in the community?
For example: community groups, good neighbors, good schools etc.

Identification of Opportunities:

1. What should change for the better?
2. Are there properties that could be better utilized?
3. Are there areas that could be made more comfortable for walking or bicycling?
Or areas that could be improved to better connect the assets with the planned future growth?

Future Vision for North 1ST:

1. What would you like to see in this neighborhood in 15-20 years?
2. How would you like to get around? Car, transit, biking, walking?
3. What types of services/businesses would you like to see in this neighborhood?
4. What other neighborhoods do you like? What do you like about these neighborhoods?

Participants were excited and engaged, the ability to add their voice to the process was appreciated. They provided their insights on assets and hopeful opportunities, but also shared their worries and concerns of development as summarized below.

Concerns

- Continued confusion about how the Transit/Urban Village process works; what will come out of it and how does the community get to influence it?
- Concerns with how new development will impact neighborhoods within and surrounding Transit Village boundary. Concerns that increased building heights adjacent to single-family homes will impact privacy and quality of life for residents in the community. Concerns regarding vehicle traffic and parking.
- High cost of housing in the area was a concern and there was an interest in how the project would address housing affordability.
- Concerns on parking pressure. Overflow parking is a general concern in neighborhoods surrounding Transit Village. VTA does not provide direct connection to airport which current results in overflow parking in neighborhoods.
- Concerns over air quality and noise from airport that reverberates off new/taller buildings in Transit Village.
- Uber/Lyft/Waze cut-through traffic is a problem for residents in the area.
- Commute hours congestion of Hedding at 1st and Taylor at 1st intersections is a challenge.
- People using SJC will park in one of the neighborhoods within or adjacent to the Village boundary to avoid paying for airport parking. There is interest in residential parking permits.
- Air quality is affected by the airport, with the smell of jet fuel regularly spreading throughout the neighborhoods in the northern part of the Village area.
- No common services such as schools, grocery stores
- Impacted by homelessness and transient population in Guadalupe River Park, characterized as blight and a wasteland.
- Hedding St bike connection to Guadalupe River Park is bad.
- VTA Light Rail is not frequent.
- 2nd Street is a better street to walk than 1st St. It's a nice walkable street.
- North of 880 is a nice wealthy mixed-use neighborhood, south of 880 is not nice.
- Too many bail bonds, low value properties.
- Not many people walking/strolling.
- North First is not wide enough.

Assets

- Existing historic buildings along N. 1st Street that contribute to the character of the neighborhood are worth preserving and promoting.
- Specific buildings that add value to the area and should be preserved are the following:
 - Mission Court apartments at Hensley
 - Barcelona Apartments at Ayer
 - Seneca Building
 - Teachers' apartment building on North First St. & Jackson St.
 - Hispanic style building on Hawthorne & First St.
 - Sandwich spot
 - Teske's
 - Ludwigs'
 - A couple of mid-century office building spaces
 - Mom & Pop businesses on George Street
- Rankin St. has distinctive character and many beautiful homes
- Hyde Park Neighborhood is a gem
- The existing apartment complexes are distinctive but still affordable for working class families.
- The mixture of diverse housing types in the area and small businesses should remain
- The historic character of the Southern area of the Transit Village should be preserved
- Japantown is a unique cultural asset.
- Existing apartments provide affordable options.
- The Village area is described as multicultural, and that quality should be preserved, celebrated and promoted through this process.
- Shaded streets and small houses should be preserved.
- Ryland Park is the only open space within the Village boundary, providing essential services for decades.
- Access to Guadalupe parkway and Guadalupe Park should be maintained/expanded upon.
- Existing greenery/street trees are mature and vibrant, improving air quality, scenery, and reducing some noise pollution.
- Each of the neighborhoods in the Village area have individual characteristics that include good quality of life and are generally thought of as inviting.
- The VTA light rail, while not always as frequent as might be desired, provides valuable connections to other parts of San José and the region.

Opportunities

- Expand the village boundary: extend the village boundary to north of I-880 and south to include St. James Park.
- Village area is too narrow to work. Due to narrowness, attention needs to be paid to how this area interacts with the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Infill/new development should be compatible with existing building types in the area.
- Historic buildings that are coherent with neighborhood and contribute to the character of the neighborhood should be preserved and valued. Don't simply preserve historic buildings because they are old.
- Bring more jobs and businesses, not too much housing.
- Focus growth north of Taylor St.
- Civic Center is highly underutilized and should be focus area of future development. It could accommodate a mix of housing types and locally servicing uses.
- Provide additional high-density development where high density already exists.
- Different options regarding location of density/new development: (1) focus density towards downtown, (2) emphasize density towards the north, (3) new development/density can be mixed throughout with historic buildings.
- Accommodate high density, but not necessarily high rise. Increased density is fine as long as street traffic gridlock is avoided. Mitigate the impact of the new high-density development on the surrounding neighborhood. Ensure there is adequate parking for the new development.
- Provide mid-density housing with parking underground.
- Provide low-density development with plenty of parking.
- Promote an open community, not a gated one.
- Introduce more condos with convenience access to services.
- Vision of a mixed-use development like Santana Row.
- Provide rental and affordable housing.
- There is currently a high concentration of affordable and transitional housing. Provide more market rate housing.
- Opportunity for student housing.
- Provide a variety of building typologies.
- Build underground parking in the Transit Village to accommodate parking needs without wasting valuable space.
- Introduce short-term parking at ground level that can be transformed to residential later.
- Introduce small businesses, such as vet hospital, library, school, daycare, yoga studio, grocery store, hardware store, small/local restaurants, coffee shop, ice cream shop, youth center, athletic facilities, community center, senior center, performing arts center and theater to enhance the neighborhood by providing services to the local community. Ideally such businesses would replace bail bonds businesses.
- Promote quality restaurants that do not require a trip downtown or to Japantown.
- The Village area, specifically north of Taylor St, is a food desert. The addition of a

grocery store and a Farmers' Market would be a major improvement to the area.

- Make Guadalupe River Park and the Transit Village a safe, clean and vibrant place.
- Connect to Caltrain.
- Improve automotive access to Hwy 87 and 880.
- Create a sense of arrival when you enter the area by automobile from 880 or 87.
- Extend VTA Light Rail to Santana Row.
- Increase frequency of VTA Light Rail.
- Reduce cut-through traffic.
- Provide residential parking permits
- Improve connectivity between the 1st St Corridor and the adjacent neighborhoods (Vendome, Japan Town, Hyde Park). There should be a sense of progression as you move North/South through the area and East/West into the neighborhoods.
- Improve connectivity to and across VTA Light Rail through better pedestrian crossings and pedestrian lighting throughout the corridor.
- Provide connection to grocery stores in the area (i.e., Trader Joes).
- Vision of a vibrant walking, biking and transit corridor with local serving businesses on ground floor and an absence of automobiles for the N. First St corridor.
- Improve and extend the bike lanes for better connectivity. The current bike lanes are not used much and are unsafe.
- Enhance the pedestrian circulation on Hedding St, especially the pedestrian connection across SR 87 to Guadalupe River Park.
- Improve pedestrian connectivity to Guadalupe River Park. Add more access points Guadalupe. Consider "a green bridge".
- Preserve and improve existing small parks (such as Ryland Park) and add more pocket parks, little plazas and community gardens throughout. Make the area "more green", promote more area for recreation.
- Extend and improve the tree canopy of the area. Plant more trees north of Mission Street.
- Improve landscaping in any new streetscape project and further improve air quality/noise/quality of life.
- Improve the pedestrian environment with shaded, inviting streets with good lighting, seating areas and safe pedestrian crossings.
- Sidewalks at rail crossings need to be improved.
- Opportunity for public art.
- Opportunity for wayfinding and signage.